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U.S. MEMBERSHIP IN THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Statement of HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS

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Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about a bill that is coming to the floor either tomorrow or the next day. It is H.J. Res. 90. This resolution, if it were to pass, would get us out of the World Trade Organization.

There are many of us here in the House and many Americans who believe very sincerely that it is not in our best interests to belong to the World Trade Organization, who believe very sincerely that international managed trade, as carried on through the World Trade Organization, does not conform with our Constitution and does not serve our interests.

It said by those who disagree with this so often in the media that those of us who disagree with the World Trade Organization that we are paranoid, we worry too much, and that there is no loss of sovereignty in this procedure. But quite frankly, there is strong evidence to present to show that not only do we lose sovereignty as we deliver this power to the World Trade Organization, that it indeed is not a legal agreement. It does not conform with our Constitution; and, therefore, we as Members of Congress should exert this privilege that we have every 5 years to think about the World Trade Organization, whether it is in our best interests and

whether it is technically a good agreement.

The World Trade Organization came into existence, and we joined it, in a lame duck session in 1994. It was hurried up in 1994 because of the concern that the new Members of Congress, who would have much more reflected the sentiments of the people, would oppose our membership in the WTO. So it went through in 1994; but in that bill, there was an agreement that a privileged resolution could come up to offer us this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, let me just point out the importance of whether or not this actually attacks our sovereignty. The CRS has done a study on the WTO, and they make a statement in this regard. This comes from a report from the Congressional Research Service on 8-25-99. It is very explicit. It says, as a member of the WTO, the United States does commit to act in accordance with the rules of the multilateral body. It is legally obligated to ensure national laws do not conflict with WTO rules. That is about as clear as one can get.

Now, more recently, on June 5, the WTO director, General Michael Moore, made this statement and makes it very clear: the dispute settlement mechanism is unique in the international architecture. WTO member governments bind themselves to the outcome from panels and, if necessary, the appellate body. That is why the WTO has attracted so much attention from all sorts of groups who wish to use this mechanism to advance their interests.

Interestingly enough, in the past, if we dealt with trade matters, they came to the U.S. Congress to change the law; they came to elected representatives to deal with this, and that is the way it should be under the Constitution. Today, though, the effort has to be directed through our world trade representative, our international trade representative, who then goes to bat for our business people at the WTO. So is it any surprise that, for instance, the company of Chiquita Banana, who has these trade wars going on in the trade fights, wants somebody in the administration to fight their battle, and just by coincidence, they have donated \$1.5 million in their effort to get influence?

So I think that the American people deserve a little bit more than this.

The membership in the WTO actually is illegal, illegal any way we look at it. If we are delivering to the WTO the authority to regulate trade, we are violating the Constitution, because it is very

clear that only Congress can do this. We cannot give that authority away. We cannot give it to the President, and we cannot give it to an international body that is going to manage trade in the WTO. This is not legal, it is not constitutional, and it is not in our best interests. It stirs up the interest to do things politically, and unelected bureaucrats make the decision, not elected officials. It was never intended to be that way, and yet we did this 5 years ago. We have become accustomed to it, and I think it is very important, it is not paranoia that makes some of us bring this up on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, we will be discussing this either tomorrow or the next day. We will make a decision, and it is not up to the World Trade Organization to decide what labor laws we have or what kind of environmental laws we have, or what tax laws.